

REMARKS

Claims 1-9, 11, 12 and 14 now stand in the application, new claim 14 having been added. Applicant notes with appreciation the allowance of claims 1-8, but respectfully requests reconsideration of the application and allowance of all claims in view of the following remarks.

Claim 12 has been amended to correct the error pointed out by the examiner.

In the Office action mailed October 5, 2007, the examiner rejected claims 9, 11 and 12 for anticipation by Egawa. Applicant distinguished Egawa in the amendment filed January 7, 2008, and in the present Office action the examiner offers no response to those arguments but simply states that the arguments are moot in view of the new grounds of rejection. But in the present Office action, claims 9, 11 and 12 are rejected for anticipation by Egawa, the same rejection as before. If the examiner maintains the rejection after considering the remarks below, a rebuttal of applicant's distinguishing arguments is requested, in accordance with MPEP 706.07.

As to the merits of the rejection, claim 9 recites a method of providing preferred access for particular point-to-point calls between users of a network, said network including at least two switching nodes and a plurality of circuit segments connected between said two switching nodes, said method comprising the steps of:

permanently reserving a subset of said circuit segments such that reserved and unreserved segments are provided between said two switching nodes;

according preferred status to a subset of users of said network; and

providing access to said reserved segments only for point-to-point calls involving a user having preferred status and not for calls involving users of said network neither of whom has said preferred status.

Egawa describes a process whereby a user in subscriber network 110 wishes to establish a connection to a user in a different subscriber network through the reconfigurable network 114, and to this end transmits a request to the reservation system 100. The reservation request contains a circuit ID specifying the circuit used by the subscriber, and links that it wishes to use for the circuit. The admission controller checks to see if there is enough available bandwidth on the requested links to satisfy the current request. Lines 11-14 of column 6 describe that the request is denied if there is not enough bandwidth left on the requested links to satisfy the request.

There is clearly an indication in Egawa that a circuit is assigned to a user, but the purpose of the Egawa is to be able to reconfigure the circuits by allocating bandwidth on requested links. In such a case, there are no reserved circuit segments as required by claim 9.

If the examiner is reading Egawa as describing a system where the specific links are also reserved for a user, then there are no reserved links as required by claim 9.

The examiner has not identified what in Egawa corresponds to the claimed two switching nodes, has not identified unreserved segments between those two nodes (claim 9 requires both reserved and unreserved segments between the nodes), and has identified reserved *circuits* for a user but has not identified reserved *circuit segments*. Accordingly, it is submitted that the subject matter of claim 9 is not found in Egawa. Claims 11 and 12 distinguish over Egawa for the same reason.

Further, while Egawa (considered in its best light) teaches that a circuit may be reserved for use by a particular user, so that the user has access to the reserved circuit for use in placing calls, it is also then the case that the particular user assigned to a particular link does not have

access to other links. New claim 14 has been added to recite the characteristic of the invention whereby a caller not only has preferred access to certain links but has lower priority access to other links not “reserved” for that caller. This is not the case in Egawa.

For the above additional reasons, it is submitted that claim 14 further patentably distinguishes over the cited art.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

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Respectfully submitted,

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